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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W
---------- 085750
R 170343 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7833
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 3111

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, MARR, KS, KN
SUBJECT: ROKG LEADERS EXAMINING MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE

BEGIN SUMMARY: IT SEEMS CLEAR FROM TALKS I HAVE HAD SEPARATELY OVER PAST WEEK WITH FOREIGN MINISTER, PRIME MINISTER, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEAKER, AND PRESIDENT' S FOREIGN POLICY ADVISOR CHOI KYU- HA, THAT ROKG AT TOP LEVELS IS EXAMINING A BUNDAMENTAL POLICY CHANGE WHICH WOULD HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON UN QUESTION AND SOUTH- NORTH RELATIONS, AND WHICH COULD BE PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED WELL BEFORE 28 TH UNGA. END SUMMARY.

1. FONMIN KIM YONG- SIK WAS FIRST TO RAISE SUBJECT WITH ME, ON MAY 9. HE SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS MATTER THAT AFTERNOON WITH PRESIDENT AND IN EXTREME CONFIDENCE SHOWED ME A PAPER OUTLINING HIS THOUGHTS (SEE PARA 4 BELOW). SPEAKER CHONG IL- KWON AND PRIMIN KIM CHONG- PIL DISCUSSED SAME SUBJECT AMONG OTHERS WHEN I MET THEM TWO DAYS LATER. CHOI KYU- HA AND I DISCUSSED IT OVER LUNCH MAY 15. ALL SAID MATTER IS VERY CLOSELY HELD. FONMIN SAID HE HAD NOT DISCUSSED SUBJECT WITH ANYONE ELSE. CHONG TOLD ME HE HAD DISCUSSED SUBJECT WITH PRESIDENT BUT NOT WITH FONMIN WITH WHOM HE LUNCHED PREVIOUS DAY. SIMILARITY OF OBSERVATIONS OF ALL FOUR, HOWEVER, SUGGESTS THAT SUBJECT MAY HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED AT NSC MEETING AFTERNOON OF MAY 9.
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2. FONMIN KIM OPENED SUBJECT WITH ME BY SAYING HE HAD COME TO CONCLUSION THAT TIME AND RESOURCES REQUIRED TO BRING OFF POSTPONEMENT OF KOREAN ITEM DEBATE IN UN FORUMS ARE TOO GREAT, AND IN ANY EVENT ROK CANNOT EXPECT TO KEEP ON WINNING MUCH LONGER. MOREOVER, ROKG WAS FINDING IT IMPOSSIBLE TO PREVENT WIDER RECOGNITION OF NORTH KOREA BY NATIONS WHICH PREVIOUSLY MAINTAINED RELATIONS ONLY WITH THE SOUTH. ACCORDINGLY, HE WAS EXAMINING POLICY CHANGE TO DEAL WITH THE " REALITY" OF NORTH KOREA. IF A CHANGE WAS DECIDED UPON HE THOUGHT NEW POLICY MIGHT BE ENUNCIATED IN JULY OR AUGUST. HE SAID ROKG HAS STUDIED GERMAN EXPERIENCE EXTENSIVELY AND IS IMPRESSED BY THE IDEAS AND WORK OF EGON BAHR.

3. FONMIN SAID HE THOUGHT PRESIDENT GENERALLY AGREED ON NEED FOR POLICY CHANGE BUT FURTHER CONSIDERATION WITHIN ROKG WAS NECESSARY. FONMIN RETURNS FROM HIS TRIP TO NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA MAY 22 AND WISHES TO RESUME DISCUSSION WITH ME. HE SAID SEVERAL TIMES THAT HE HAS STRESSED IN ROKG COUNCILS THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSULTING WITH US FULLY ON A POLICY CHANGE OF THIS KIND. PROCEDURALLY FONMIN THOUGHT THAT AFTER AGREEMENT IS REACHED ON A NEW POLICY, IT SHOULD BE ENUNCIATED IN A MAJOR ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT. HE CITED ANNUAL PRESIDENTIAL INDEPENDENCE DAY MESSAGE ON AUGUST 15 AS EXAMPLE OF IDEAL OCCASION.

4. KIM OUTLINED SIX POINTS WHICH FORM THE FRAMEWORK OF HIS THOUGHTS ABOUT A NEW POLICY:

A. SECURITY MUST REMAIN THE PARAMOUNT CONSIDERATION; FOR THIS ROKG MUST DEPEND ON OWN STRENGTH BACKED UP BY U. S. COMMITMENT AND PRESENCE.

B. THE ROK MUST BE FOR REUNIFICATION IN PRINCIPLE.

C. THE ROK MUST, HOWEVER, FIND A MODUS VIVENDI FOR PEACEFUL CO- EXISTENCE WITH A SEPARATE NORTH KOREA WITHOUT ACCEPTING THE FINALITY AND FORMALITY OF TWO KOREAS.

D. THEREFORE, THE ROK AND NORTH KOREA MUST MOVE
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TOWARD AN AGREEMENT ON MATTERS AFFECTING THEM. THIS WOULD NOT CONSITITUTE FORMAL RELATIONS, AND THE ROK DOES NOT WANT TO TALK ABOUT A PEACE TREATY PER SE. IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR THE PRESENT TO RETAIN THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT WHICH SERVES PURPOSES WHICH OTHERWISE COULD ONLY BE SERVED BY A PEACE TREATY. (I PROBED ON THIS POINT BUT FOREIGN MINISTER WAS VAGUE IN HIS COMMENTS) .)

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E. THE ROK SHOULD DECLARE THAT IT IS PREPARED TO SEE
NORTH KOREA PARTICIPATE IN UN ORGANIZATIONS. FONMIN
OBSERVED THAT BOTH SIDES PARTICIPATE IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES
AND IN THE ICRC, AND ROK SHOULD NOT CONTINUE TO OBJECT TO
NORTH' S PARTICIPATION IN UN ORGANIZATIONS. HE RECO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SEOUL 3111

EXDIS

6. SPEAKER CHONG IL- KWON WAS IMPRESSED WITH NEED FOR A NEW
POLICY BY HIS 3- WEEK TRIP TO EUROPE AND MIDDLE EAST. (HE
WAS IN TEHRAN AND TALKED WITH SHAH THE DAY IRAN ANNOUNCED
RECOGNITION OF NORTH KOREA. SHAH COULD NOT UNDERSTAND
WHY ROK OPPOSES OTHERS HAVING RELATIONS WITH NORTH WHEN
SOUTH HAS OPENED A RELATIONSHIP). CHONG DID NOT THINK
THERE WOULD BE ANY PROBLEMS WITH ROK PUBLIC OPINION, AND
HE THOUGHT IT WOULD HAVE BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON S- N TALKS
BY INDUCING NORTH TO ALLOW PROGRESS IN THE MISGUIDED
BELIEF THAT IT COULD EXPLOIT THE NEW SITUATION.

7. CHOI KYU- HA SHARED THE CONCERN OF THE PRIMIN THAT
THE SOUTH MIGHT BE " OUTNUMBERED" IN DUE COURSE AS FREE
WORLD COUNTRIES RECOGNIZE THE NORTH BUT SOCIALIST
COUNTRIES REFUSE TO RECOGNIZE THE SOUTH. HE DID NOT
SEEM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT AUN DEBATE WITH NORTH KOREA
PRESENT WOULD CREATE SERIOUS PRLBLEM. HE SAID
DEBATE COULD BE RESOLVED IN ROK FAVOR WITH A RESOLUTION
CALLING ON SOUTH AND NORTH TO SETTLE THEIR PROBLEM PEACE-
FULLY AND TO THAT END CONTINUE THEIR DIALOGUE. WITH HIM,
HOWEVER, AS WITH FONIMIN, PRIMIN, AND SPEAKER, I POINTED OUT
THAT NORTH WILL MAKE MAJOR EFFORT IN UN TO BRING
PRESSURE ON WITHDRAWAL OF U. S. FORCES. CAREFUL ATTENTION
MUST, THEREFORE, BE GIVEN TO WAYS IN WHICH THAT DRIVE WILL
BE MET.

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8. FONMIN, PRIMIN, SPEAKER, AND CHOI ALL EMPHASIZED THAT ROK WOULD BE IN MORE ADVANTAGEOUS POSITIONTO TAKE NEW POLICY INITIATIVE IF IT WINS THE VOTE FOR POSTPONEMENT OF NORTH KOREAN ENTRANCE INTO WHO.

9. WHEN FONMIN AND PRIMIN ASKED FOR MY VIEWS, I SAID THAT WE WOULD WELCOME FURTHER DISCUSSION INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF HANDLING THE KOREAN QUESTION IN THE UN. I SAID IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO FOCUS PARTICULARLY ON HOW KOREAN ITEM AT UNGA WOULD BE HANDLED AS PART OF NEW INITIATIVE, HAVING IN MIND SUCH QUESTIONS AS WHAT TO DO ABOUT UNCURK AND HOW TO DEAL WITH A NEW HEAVY NORTH KOREAN DRIVE IN THE UN FORUM TO ELIMINATE UNC AND BRING ABOUT WITHDRAWAL OF U. S. FORCES.

10. COMMENT:

A. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT UNDER THE PRESSURE OF WORLD TREND TO OPEN RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA, ROKG IS AT LAST MOVING REALISTICALLY TO ADJUST ITS POLICIES TO THE REALITIES OF 1973. I THINK WE CAN ACCEPT FOR POLICY PLANNING PURPOSES THAT THE SITUATION IS MOVING IN THE DIRECTION OF DE FACTO TWO KOREAS THROUGH BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH WILL PROBABLY FIND IT CONVENIENT TO AVOID USE OF THAT TERM. WITHOUT GETTING IN FRONT OF ROKG OR TRYING TO PUSH IT AT A FASTER PACE THAN IT IS PREPARED TO TAKE, WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE THIS KIND OF THINKING. WE SHOULD AT SAME TIME BE PREPARED TO INFLUENCE ROKG ON ISSUES OF COMMON INTEREST, MOST SPECIFICALLY THOSE MATTERS AFFECTING ALL ASPECTS OF UN DEBATE AND UN PRESENCE IN KOREA.

B. WHILE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ROK DECISION TO ACCEPT THE NORTH IN UN ORGANIZATIONS SO SOON AFTER MAJOR EFFORT BY U. S. AND ROKG TO KEEP NORTH OUT OF WHO MIGHT POSE SOME PROBLEMS, I ASSUME DEPT AGREES THAT THIS SHOULD NOT DETER US FROM ENCOURAGING AND WORKING WITH ROKG AS IT MOVES IN A DESIRABLE AND REALISTIC POLICY DIRECTION. WITH THIS IN MIND, I WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS PREPARATORY TO FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER.

C. ALTHOUGH AT SOME POINT GOVERNMENTS OF JAPAN, UK,

AUSTRALIA, AND OTHER FRIENDS OF ROK SHOULD BE BROUGHT IN, FOREIGN MINISTER SAID ROK WILL WANT IN THE FIRST (#)

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CONSULTATIONS TO THE U. S. ALONE. I THINK
WE SHOULD PLAN TO PROCEED ON THAT BASIS, BUT I SUSPECT HE
WILL TRY OUT HIS IDEAS ON OTHERS IN THE MEANTIME. I SUGGEST,
THEREFORE, THAT USUN AND EMBASSY TOKYO REFRAIN FROM DIS-
CUSSION OUTSIDE U. S. CIRCLES AT THIS POINT AND UNTIL WE AND
ROKG HAVE MORE CLEARLY IN MIND WHERE WE ARE PLANNING TO
GO IN THESE MATTERS.
HABIB

NOTE BY OC/ T: SEOUL 3111/2 (#) OMISSION CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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